

The Anniversary Meeting of the Sabbath Reformation Society was held in the City Hall, Kingston, on the evening of Tuesday the 19th January, 1858, the Rev. R. V. Rogers, President, in the chair. Prayer was offered by the Rev. K. M. Fenwick. The Report was read by Dr. Mair, Corresponding Secretary.

Moved by the Rev. F. W. Dobbs, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Henderson, and

*Resolved*—That the Report now read be adopted, printed, and circulated under the direction of the Committee; and that the following be the Board of Management for the ensuing year:—President, Rev. R. V. Rogers; Vice-President, Thomas Askew, Esq.; Treasurer, Wm. Ferguson, Esq.; Secretary, Dr. Mair. Committee, Captain Moffat, Dr. Clarke, Messrs. Kirk, Vick, Hopkirk, Paton, Neil Macleod, George Hardy, James Stewart, Wm. Macle, A. Macalister, Griffith Davies, Thomas Masson, Robert McPaul, A. J. O'Loughlin, Wm. Dean, David Linton, with all Ministers of the Gospel who are duly qualified.

Moved by the Rev. Dr. George, seconded by the Rev. K. M. Fenwick, and

*Resolved*—That a religion is essential to the well being of a nation, and the general observance of the Sabbath to its religion.

Moved by the Rev. Professor Weir, seconded by the Rev. Smart, and

*Resolved*—That the glaring encroachments upon the Lord's Day in this Province, by labor in the Post-office, Canal and Railway departments, call imperatively for the united, earnest and persevering prayers and efforts of all Christians for their immediate extinction.

Moved by Dr. Mair, seconded by Mr. Askew, and

*Resolved*—That this meeting strongly urges upon the executive committee the necessity of entering into a correspondence with the known friends of the Sabbath in the cities and chief towns of the Province, as to the organization of a Sabbath Alliance (agreeable to the design of the Society, as expressed in section VIII. paragraph 6, of the Constitution), and if deemed expedient, of co-operating with them in the work.

## Eighty Report.

Canada prospers not, because she outrages the Lord's Day. This proposition may not apply in the strictest sense to material prosperity, for it may be argued that she progresses in her agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; and facts and figures may seem to bear out this assertion. Nevertheless, the axiom still holds good, that she has no moral or religious prosperity, because she, by her Government, has broken the Fourth Commandment by the systematic desecration of the Sabbath in her post-office, canal and railway departments—the chief channels through which her wealth flows. Dispute it who may, it is "righteousness, and righteousness alone," which exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people; and surely that foul stigma must soil the escutcheon of this "people" while they, through their rulers, tolerate these crying evils, which, like conducting-rods, are pointed towards heaven, as if to tempt the lightning and thunder of God's wrath to descend upon them and thither them to atoms! The Committee of your Society (the only institution of the kind in this Province, it is believed, which has survived the stage of infancy), would return their devout thanks to Jehovah, for the confidence with which He has inspired any of them, and the measure of success which He has vouchsafed to their labors during the past year. At the same time they must take shame to themselves, and implore forgiveness for the coldness of their hearts, and the feebleness of their endeavors in prosecuting so glorious an enterprise. They complied with the usual custom in requesting Ministers of the Gospel of all denominations to make "the Pearl or Queen of Days" the subject of special discourse on the third Sabbath of January, by advertisement. They dispersed widely throughout the Province about two thousand stirring addresses to influential persons, and one hundred and fifty petitions in triplicate were sent to cities, congregations, &c., with instructions how to transmit them to the Legislature. A memorial in triplicate was forwarded from this city signed by about five hundred persons, praying for the abolition of post-office, canal and railway labor on the Sabbath, which was duly acknowledged. The Press—it has been remarked by that staunch and enlightened friend of the Sabbath, the Rev. R. F. Burns (to whom the Society owes a large debt of grateful acknowledgment rendered to it as their Secretary for a succession of years), in his last report to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada—that "The Press has lent its aid as well as the plat-

form. In a large number of our Provincial journals editorials and contributed articles have appeared very favorable to the cause. With a few exceptions the tone of our newspapers on the question is healthy." The Committee tender their grateful acknowledgements to the editors of papers who have inserted their notices gratuitously, or otherwise aided the Society.

As regards Legislative action—the Legislative Council appointed a select committee, by whom a report was drawn up upon the 29th of April, recognizing the right of all the inhabitants of the Province to one day of rest out of seven, and the duty incumbent upon them to prevent any one from being deprived of this sacred right. Founded upon this document, an address, carried by a majority of 15 to 11 (the President of the Executive Council voting in the minority), was presented to the Governor General, praying that his Excellency would be pleased to order the post-offices and canals of Canada to be closed on the Sabbath. The thanks of this Society, and of the religious community, are merited by the Hon. Adam Ferguson and the Hon. P. B. DeBlaquiere, the former of whom moved and the latter seconded the address to the Governor General. The question was, however, to be decided by the suffrages of the Lower House, Mr. G. Brown having previously brought in a bill, which was read for the third time on the 28th of May, 1857. Its design was to relieve the employees of the Government in the post-office and canal departments from Sunday labor. The whole bill was comprised in a few lines, providing that on Sunday no post-office in the Province shall be open for the transaction of business, and no mails despatched; and that the canals shall be closed from midnight of Saturday until midnight on Sunday. He stated that on two previous occasions he had been within one vote of carrying the bill for closing the post-offices and preventing the running of mails on the Sabbath; that in 1852-3 twenty-five thousand names had been subscribed to petitions in favor of these objects; that in these years there were two thousand five hundred persons compelled to labor in the post-offices on the Sabbath, and thus unjustly deprived of their right of one-seventh part of the time which the Lord had given them for his sole service; that there were at the present period no fewer than four thousand persons similarly circumstanced in connexion with this department of the public service, all of them, therefore, deeply interested in the passing of this bill. It encountered vast opposition from the Government; unhandsome means were used to strangle it although it came to its third reading, when it was lost by the casting vote of the Speaker, who turned the scale against it, there being previously an equal number of votes. The thanks of this Society and of the religious community are especially due to George Brown, Esq., who with the utmost zeal and perseverance has devoted his time and talents to the furtherance of this great work, and has taken the lead in the Parliamentary agitation of it.

The battle has again been lost, but a decisive victory must soon be won if patriotic and christian men fight this good fight of faith with resoluteness and vigor, if they allow of no compromise—no half-measures—if they persevere by petition and other constitutional means to demand a Sabbath free from sacrilegious intrusion of any kind by the public departments, and if they furnish their blades and temper them for the combat with the sacred fire of prayer for the Divine blessing, not trusting to the arm of flesh in using the sword of the Spirit, but to the grace and power of Him who is the Lord of the Sabbath, for a bloodless triumph!

Our notices of kindred Societies in the Fatherland must be very meagre. The Lord's-Day Observance Society of London still holds on its way in defence of the Sabbath. Its chief efforts lately seem to have been directed to the suppression of Sabbath mobs and private bands of music in the public resorts of the Provincial cities; and it is matter of congratulation and thankfulness to the Lord of the Sabbath that the injurious attempts of anti-Sabbath Leagues, and other combinations of men, to open the Crystal Palace, National Museums, picture-galleries, &c., upon the Sabbath, have been frustrated.

It is to be regretted that since Romanist ag-

gression became so formidable in Scotland, the sword seems to have been sheathed, which was formerly powerfully wielded against a foe not less opposed to the welfare of human society—Sabbath profanation; and there the Sabbath Alliance no longer brings her powerful artillery to bear against this other stronghold of Satan's kingdom, but slumbers in inglorious ease. May she speedily be awakened from her dangerous torpor, and resume her bold front of defiance with renovated vigor!

One word about the Desjardins Bridge catastrophe, by which sixty souls were hurried into the presence of their august and impartial Judge without a note of preparation, causing lamentation and woe to hundreds of miserable relatives, and striking consternation into the hearts of thousands. Previous to this frightful disaster, and close to the scene of it, while the road was being constructed, men were kept employed every Sabbath at excavating until some twelve or fifteen men were killed in the most sudden and awful manner by the falling of the embankments upon them. "But a few weeks since"—your committee transcribe from an article copied into the Echo of April 19th from the Canadian Christian Advocate—"as we have been informed, the Rev. R. Irvine, Pastor of Knox's Church in this city (Hamilton), was greatly surprised and pained to find a large number of men, over twenty, if we mistake not, employed in repairing this fatal bridge, and the very portion of it, too, which gave way and precipitated a whole train, with its *perilous living freight*, into the awful abyss below. He was so deeply pained at this unblushing profanation of the Lord's Day that he took the first opportunity to acquaint the President of the Board of Directors with the fact, and to entreat him to have means adopted to put a stop to such gross immorality, with what success subsequent proceedings will show." "As if this was not enough, having completed the new structure, the last Sabbath was employed in testing its strength, and we are informed that no less than fourteen heavy trains were run over the bridge for that purpose." Comment upon this transaction were superfluous. Hear, wonder, and abhor! But let us not stop with an expression of righteous indignation against such God-defying acts. Let us be up and doing. Let us come "to the help of the Lord against the mighty," lest sudden destruction come upon us "as travail upon a woman with child and we have not power to deliver."

To conclude, a few practical hints may be offered for the consideration of the friends of the Sabbath at this important crisis.

1. Distinct organizations should be formed in all the cities, towns and principal villages, for the purpose of exciting and maintaining a warmer interest in the Sabbath question.
2. A Sabbath Alliance should be instituted for guiding public opinion upon this vital subject, and for collecting, systematizing and concentrating the labors of the various Societies, and making them accessible to the public.
3. Ministers of the Gospel, and other competent persons, should bring right views on the Sabbath prominently before the public, depicting the evils of Sabbath desecration, and the blessings of Sabbath observance in their true colors, in short, pithy articles in the political and religious journals.
4. All Christian men, women and children should carefully abstain from anything to do with the post-offices, railways or canals on the Lord's Day, and set their faces like a flint against every form of Sabbath desecration, however fashionable or popular.
5. It is of paramount importance that all Christians should feel it to be their duty and privilege, as the Lord's remembrancers, to plead earnestly and perseveringly at the Throne of Grace that God would be pleased to influence the minds of men in authority to abolish all post-office, canal and railway labor on the Sabbath; and, 2nd, that He would cause all magistrates, and the public generally, to see to it that violations of Sabbath laws do not go unpunished.
6. Let all be alive to the proceedings of the Legislature, and exercise the elective franchise conscientiously, so that if possible God-fearing, sin-hating, Sabbath-loving men may be returned to represent the various constituencies in the Councils of the Province, and that there may be hope of the right men filling the right places in all public departments.
7. Let correct statistics of accidents and offences occurring on railways, canals, &c., from Sabbath desecration, be obtained, published, and commented upon, so as to open the eyes of the blind to the curse of Sabbath-breaking.
8. Let petitions, strongly worded and numerously signed, through the tables of the Legislative halls as often as Parliament meets, till the just and reasonable claims of Canada for an undecorated Sabbath are granted.

\* Since writing the above we have been privileged to learn that the directors of the Company have resolved upon throwing open the Crystal Palace upon the Sabbath. We trust that the friends of the cause in the mother country will buckle on their armor afresh. There can be no question that this will be the first of a series of similar aggressions.